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FURTHER REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PURSUANT TO SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS 743 (1992) AND 762 (1992)

INTRODUCTION

1. The present report is submitted to the Security Council pursuant to resolutions 743 (1992) of 21 February 1992 and 762 (1992) of 30 June 1992. Its purpose is to provide the Council with updated information relating to the progress made by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the implementation of the mandate entrusted to it in Croatia under the United Nations peace-keeping plan (S/23280, annex III), as well as in the implementation of resolution 762 (1992), which called for the establishment of a Joint Commission to oversee the return of Croatian authority to certain areas of Croatia known as the "pink zones". The report brings to the Council's attention a number of major difficulties that have faced UNPROFOR in the United Nations Protected Areas and adjoining regions since the submission of a previous report on these matters on 27 July 1992 (S/24353). It contains information available up to 1800 hours New York time on Friday, 25 September 1992.

I. VIOLATIONS OF THE CEASE-FIRE

2. Since my report of 27 July 1992, the situation along the confrontation line has been generally stable, although there have been some incidents of significance and occasional small arms fire. However, tension has been high in Sector South, particularly in the areas of the Peruca Dam, Miljevci Plateau (where there was a Croatian Army incursion on 21 June 1992) and Zemunik airport; in these areas heavy machine-guns and light mortars have sometimes been used.

3. The major incidents that have generated considerable tension have been as follows:

(a) On 7 August 1992, fighting erupted in an area adjacent to the south-eastern portion of Sector West, apparently due to attempts by armed elements from the Croatian side to cross the Sava River and attack Bosnian Serb elements south of the river. United Nations troops in the area were

caught in an exchange of fire that included use of tanks, artillery and mortars; fortunately, there were no United Nations casualties. A significant feature of this incident was that nine bodies in a variety of uniforms found on the southern side of the Sava River were not claimed by either side, which gave rise to suspicion that they may have been those of mercenaries;

(b) On 13 August 1992, a group of Serbs, from the village of Markusica in Sector East, who were attempting to harvest maize in an area just across the confrontation line, were attacked by the Croatian Army. Four were killed and 19 taken prisoner. The situation was defused by prompt action by UNPROFOR, which also secured the release of the 19 individuals;

(c) On 21 August 1992, three Serb so-called "border militia" personnel were shot dead in the vicinity of the confrontation line in Sector East;

(d) In the last week of August 1992, a large group of armed personnel, who were attempting to infiltrate through Sector North into the Bihac-Cazin area in Bosnia and Herzegovina, were engaged by the local Serb militia and a number were killed or captured. Prisoners interviewed by UNPROFOR said that they had been mobilized and trained by the Croatian Army in certain areas in Croatia and were being infiltrated in small groups into Bosnia and Herzegovina to join in the fighting there. This matter was raised with President Tudjman of Croatia on 31 August 1992 by Under-Secretary-General Marrack Goulding. The President said that such practices would no longer be permitted. Tension in the area, however, remains high and the incident has been used by the Serbs in the United Nations Protected Areas to substantiate their fears of attacks launched against them from Croatian-held territory.

II. PROBLEMS THAT HAVE ARISEN IN THE UNITED NATIONS PROTECTED AREAS

A. Demilitarization

4. The first two phases of demilitarization proceeded well. The Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) completed its withdrawal from Croatia, with the single but significant exception of the Dubrovnik area, and the Territorial Defence Forces demobilized, placing their weapons in storage depots under a double-lock system. However, the complete demilitarization of the United Nations Protected Areas has been delayed by a violation of the United Nations plan, which was referred to in my report of 27 July. This is the creation of new Serb militia forces designated variously as "Special Police", "Border Police", or "Multi-purpose Police Brigades", made up of former members of JNA, the Territorial Defence Forces and irregular elements, which may total as many as 16,000 armed men, equipped with armoured personnel carriers, mortars and machine-guns. The authorities of the so-called Republic of Serbia Krajina (hereinafter referred to as the "Knin authorities") claim these are police units. The Force Commander considers that their level of armament and their almost total ignorance of police work show that, in reality, they are paramilitary forces. UNPROFOR has vigorously protested this violation of the

United Nations plan and has pressed repeatedly for the demobilization of those newly created units and for the regular police to be armed only with side-arms, in accordance with the plan.

5. These efforts have largely succeeded in Sector West but not yet in the other sectors. In late July, in Sector East, UNPROFOR tried to resolve the problem by more forceful means. A brigade of "Special Police" were blocked in the north-western corner of the Baranja by elements of the Belgian battalion. At the same time, a large number of "border police" were blockaded by the Russian battalion in the area between Lipovac and Marinci. In each case, the situation deteriorated rapidly and, to avoid bloodshed, it was decided to suspend the use of force and further negotiations ensued. This led to the surrender of approximately 500 personal weapons to the Belgian battalion. Since that time, however, these so-called "police" have continued to resist disarmament and have become increasingly hostile to UNPROFOR personnel.

6. UNPROFOR has increased its efforts to protect the non-Serb populations from "ethnic cleansing" by the paramilitary units. As described in paragraphs 10 to 18 below, they engage in acts of terrorism against minorities, especially in Sector East and, to a lesser extent, in Sector South and appear to enjoy complete impunity. In Sector East, other armed elements, reportedly controlled by unidentified persons in Belgrade, add to UNPROFOR's problems. It is notable that the victims of some of these lawless gangs are themselves Serbs of a more moderate political persuasion.

7. The justification given by the Knin authorities for these forces is that they are needed to defend Serb-controlled areas from attacks and infiltration by the Croatian Army. General Nambiar has repeatedly stressed to the authorities in Belgrade and Knin that it is UNPROFOR that exercises the protection function in the United Nations Protected Areas and that the presence of these paramilitary units is contrary to the United Nations plan and has caused the Croatian Army to retain some of its forces at the confrontation line. As a result clashes continue to occur along the line, fuelling intercommunal tension in the United Nations Protected Areas.

8. On 4 September Under-Secretary-General Goulding reached an agreement with the Knin authorities that demobilization of these forces would be undertaken in accordance with an agreed timetable. It was subsequently agreed on 11 September that this would be done in two stages. In the first stage, by 20 September 1992, all militia personnel, other than regular civil police, were to be confined to barracks within the United Nations Protected Areas, with their weapons. They would not leave the barracks in uniform or carrying weapons. In the second stage, to take place by 15 October 1992, all militia personnel, other than regular civil police, were to be demobilized, with all militia weapons being deposited in designated storage areas under UNPROFOR control and supervision.

9. Despite the passage of the deadline for the first stage of this process, however, demilitarization has not begun. The authorities in Knin, who nominally control those elements, have stated that they cannot comply with the

agreement because of Croatian Army behaviour and the alleged inability of UNPROFOR to control the situation. Not only is there no evidence that the Knin authorities intend to honour the agreement, but new units are being mobilized in Sectors East and South, allegedly to prepare for supposedly imminent Croatian attacks on these areas. The "Minister of the Interior" in Knin has told UNPROFOR that the Security Council should be informed that the Vance plan and resolution 762 (1992) must be amended because it is not acceptable in its present form. Repeated efforts by senior UNPROFOR personnel to obtain compliance with the plan and the 4 September agreement have so far proved to no avail.

B. Acts of terrorism

10. As is evident from the preceding paragraphs, the situation in Sector East has not improved since my report of 27 July 1992. On the contrary there has been a general breakdown of law and order, with no functioning court system. Acts of harassment, intimidation and aggression against the non-Serb population have continued and have indeed been on the increase in the Baranja region. While terrorism is mostly directed against non-Serbs, on 29 August four Serb militiamen were killed by other Serbs, and three villagers were wounded. Cease-fire violations, and incidents such as the shooting on 13 August 1992 of four elderly Serbs at Markusica by the Croatian Army (see para. 3 (b) above), have also contributed to a rise in intercommunal tension.

11. There has also been a marked deterioration in the economic situation. Unemployment, accompanied by crime, is on the increase. The victims are often old people who are unable to protect themselves and their property. A number of brutal murders have occurred, frequently at the hands, or with the collusion, of the "Special Police". The impact on Sector East of the sanctions imposed by the Council on Serbia and Montenegro under resolution 757 (1992) suggests that the economic situation will worsen in the next few months.

12. Non-Serbs have been particularly affected by the economic decline. They are the first to be dismissed, either for genuine economic reasons or so that their jobs can be taken by newly arrived Serb refugees. As noted above, the practice of "ethnic cleansing" has not been eradicated, despite continuous UNPROFOR efforts, and non-Serbs continue to be coerced into signing away their property and rights of residence. The Force Commander has also reported that urgent humanitarian assistance is needed, not only for non-Serbs but also for the deprived Serb population.

13. In the Croatian-controlled part of Sector West there has been a slight improvement in the situation. For instance, there have been fewer recent incidents of the burning of Serb houses. However, numerous cases of intimidation and arrest of Serb residents by the Croatian authorities have been documented. Some Serbs have been removed from UNPROFOR protection to the military prison in Bjelovar, outside the Sector, before being involuntarily

exchanged as "prisoners-of-war", an indirect form of expulsion. The United Nations Civilian Police (UNCIVPOL) has obtained evidence, including photographic and medical evidence, of very serious beatings of several Serbs while in custody. This evidence has been presented to the Croatian authorities, and UNPROFOR has been advised that it has been delivered to the Public Attorney's Office for further proceedings. A confidence-building programme initiated by UNPROFOR, whereby persons from both sides of the Sector can meet on certain days at UNPROFOR checkpoints, is being undermined by open interference and harassment of the visitors by Croatian local police and military police.

14. In Sector South also, there has been a deterioration in law and order with an increase of incidents against the non-Serb population, including the burning and destruction of houses and churches, looting, acts of intimidation, aggression and even murder. These events have often been matched by similar actions against Serbs across the confrontation line.

15. In Sector North, the non-Serb population is now very small. This has made it possible for UNPROFOR personnel to monitor their situation closely and may be one of the reasons why there is no evidence of the intimidation and terrorism that has occurred in other sectors. Acts of violence in this sector seem to relate more to spill-overs of the fighting in Bosnia and Herzegovina, incidents along the cease-fire line with Croatian forces and incursions (or fears of incursion) from Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

16. Few, if any, of the acts of terrorism described above have led to the prosecution and punishment of the offenders. UNPROFOR's civilian police have prepared numerous documented reports of atrocities, in many of which members of the militia forces have been implicated. These have been conveyed to the local authorities as well as to the authorities in Belgrade. While Belgrade disclaims jurisdiction, the local police and judicial authorities in the United Nations Protected Areas have not taken action in a single case. On the contrary, one terrorist who committed three consecutive murders in Sector East was released after each such event and eventually conveyed out of the Sector by the local police. The courts and the remaining professional police themselves appear intimidated by the irregular forces. On 21 September, a judge in Sector East told representatives of UNCIVPOL that he had closed his court because it was no longer possible for him to function.

17. The regular civil police in the United Nations Protected Areas, though often well-trained and professional, are inactive, and seem more or less impotent in the face of the "Special Police". Some professional police chiefs have been dismissed and replaced by extremists who know nothing of police work, but a great deal about intimidation. The overall failure to cooperate with UNPROFOR has undermined UNPROFOR's ability to fulfil its police monitoring functions. There are, of course, exceptions; but an operation which is dependent upon the cooperation of the local authorities is substantially weakened when such cooperation is not forthcoming.

18. It thus appears that no system of law and order exists in the United Nations Protected Areas. Indeed this was admitted to UNPROFOR, in respect of Sector East especially, by a senior member of the Knin authorities on 7 August 1992. In this situation the role of UNCIVPOL has become even more important. Its monitoring role may have been diminished by the lack of police activity to monitor, but increasing numbers of the local population are turning to UNCIVPOL for assistance - as victims of crime, for security, or for humanitarian help. This is happening despite sustained and threatening campaigns, especially in Sector East, by radio, pamphlets and other means, to dissuade the local population from contacting UNCIVPOL.

C. Return of refugees and displaced persons

19. A central element of the United Nations plan is the voluntary return of refugees and displaced persons to their places of origin. This return must be coordinated with the Croatian Government, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and UNPROFOR; it also requires the cooperation of the local authorities in the areas of return and that adequate security conditions be established there. For these conditions to be achieved, the first essential step is progress in the disarming and demobilizing of the "Special Police". Since such conditions have not yet been established, it is not possible at this time to proceed with a general return.

20. The possibility of pilot programmes for a limited number of returns to a few selected villages has been studied by UNPROFOR in conjunction with UNHCR. It has been concluded that such programmes could be undertaken in Sector West, and possibly in Sector North, but not at this time in Sectors East and South. They could also be effected in parts of the "pink zones".

21. In Sector West, two villages have been identified for such a programme in that part of the Sector that is under the Croatian local authorities, and two in the part of the Sector under Serb local authorities. At the same time, there has been an encouraging development in this Sector, involving daytime visits by refugees from one side of the Sector to the other to start work on the rehabilitation of their houses. It also seems possible to initiate steps towards the implementation of a similar pilot project in Sector North. One village has been identified for this purpose. It is predominantly Croatian and there is an UNCIVPOL station close by. The final details for the initiation of these programmes are currently being discussed by UNPROFOR and UNHCR with the authorities concerned.

22. The Croatian Government has agreed with the principle that the return of refugees must await the establishment of adequate security conditions but is pressing hard for those conditions to be established as soon as possible. However, constant agitation by the media and certain political authorities for immediate return is building up dangerous pressures, with arbitrarily chosen and unilaterally proclaimed timetables for return and advertised mass marches to the sectors. UNPROFOR has told the authorities that such process of return must be voluntary and that any exploitation of the deep and very

understandable desire of people to return to their homes is irresponsible. Ill-timed and uncoordinated returns could lead to a further disaster. The Croatian Government has, despite these interventions, told UNPROFOR that several thousand displaced persons will seek to force their way back into Sector East on 30 September. At a public meeting with UNPROFOR on 24 September, the Commander of the Croatian Army indicated that his troops would support this attempt and that he accepted that there could be casualties. Mobilization of Serb forces in the Sector, which had already begun, has now become general. UNPROFOR, seeking by all available means to defuse this contrived situation, has publicly indicated that it will do all it can to protect the innocent, but has stated that it will accept no responsibility for what may follow. Mr. Vance and Lord Owen have conveyed to the Croatian authorities their grave concern about this situation.

III. THE DUBROVNIK AREA

23. JNA was required by the United Nations peace-keeping plan to withdraw from all other areas in Croatia following UNPROFOR's assumption of its responsibilities in the United Nations Protected Areas. UNPROFOR completed its assumption of its responsibilities in all three United Nations Protected Areas on 2 July 1992. None the less, JNA is still occupying areas close to Dubrovnik, despite continuous efforts by UNPROFOR to secure its withdrawal. As was reported in document S/24353, the Belgrade authorities had told the Force Commander that, in view of the strategic importance of the Prevlaka peninsula, which controls the entrance to the Gulf of Kotor, JNA's withdrawal would be contingent on the demilitarization of this peninsula and on a guarantee that Croatian heavy weapons would not be located in proximity to it. Although it was explained by the Force Commander that this issue lay outside UNPROFOR's mandate, he agreed to convey Belgrade's views to the Croatian Government.

24. Subsequent discussions were conducted by UNPROFOR on this matter with both sides. These discussions were carried forward by Under-Secretary-General Goulding and by Mr. Vance and Lord Owen during their recent missions to the area. A proposal elaborated by UNPROFOR was finally accepted by the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Mr. Milan Panic, and the Chief of Staff of the Yugoslav Army, General Zivota Panic, on 12 September 1992 and by President Tudjman of Croatia on 15 September 1992. Under this agreement, the Yugoslav Army will withdraw completely from Croatia, Prevlaka will be demilitarized and heavy weapons will be removed from neighbouring areas of Croatia and Montenegro. It has been proposed that implementation of this agreement be monitored by UNPROFOR and/or the European Community Monitoring Mission (ECMM). UNPROFOR is currently working out the modalities with the local commanders on both sides.

IV. THE JOINT COMMISSION AND "THE PINK ZONES"

25. The Joint Commission was established by resolution 762 (1992). As described in my report of 26 June 1992 (S/24188), its main task is to oversee and monitor the restoration of the Croatian Government's authority in the "pink zones". These zones are areas of Croatia that had been controlled by JNA and in which there is a substantial Serb population, but which lie outside the agreed boundaries of the United Nations Protected Areas, though adjacent to them. The Council approved a series of measures that would be taken, under UNPROFOR's supervision, to avoid further conflict in the region and stabilize the situation. These measures relate to the assumption by UNPROFOR of its full protective functions in Sectors North and South, undertaken on 2 July; withdrawal by the various armed forces from the "pink zones"; monitoring and patrolling by UNPROFOR military observers and civilian police; the deployment of ECMM personnel; the establishment of a general amnesty in the area; and the restoration, under UNPROFOR's supervision, and at a time decided by it to be appropriate, of the authority of the Croatian police, with such local police being re-established in proportion to the demographic structure of the areas prior to the conflict. The Commission consists of UNPROFOR; ECMM; the Government of Croatia; and the Serb local authorities based in Knin. Mr. Cedric Thornberry, Director of Civil Affairs, chairs the Commission on behalf of UNPROFOR.

26. The Joint Commission has so far held five meetings. After a difficult beginning, its work has recently shown some welcome signs of progress. Early meetings were overshadowed by Serb complaints of persistent cease-fire violations and infiltrations by the Croatian Army; Croatia's refusal to withdraw its police from the area of the Miljeveci plateau after an incursion there on 21 June; alleged non-cooperation by Croatia in the exhumation of Serb bodies from Miljeveci after the fighting there; and other matters which, the Serb side said, precluded their full participation in the meetings. At the first three meetings it either participated but declined to discuss matters of substance or arrived at the location but would not attend the plenary meeting or said that it had to leave early because of another engagement. UNPROFOR, with the active support of ECMM, sought to overcome these problems and ensure that the Joint Commission proceeded with the tasks entrusted to it by the Security Council.

27. At the third meeting, the Commission established subcommissions to deal with allegations of cease-fire violations and other security matters; with legal aspects of resolution 762 (1992); and with cooperation with regard to various economic and humanitarian facilities of mutual interest. But the first meetings of these subcommissions were also delayed by the unavailability of the Serb delegations. At the fourth meeting of the Commission on 21 August 1992, the Chairman expressed great concern at the lack of concrete achievement by the Commission and at the deteriorating situation in the "pink zones". It was essential, he said, that practical progress now be made to remove the causes of friction and to move towards the realization of the purposes of the resolution. A similar line was taken by General Nambiar, by Under-Secretary-General Goulding, and by Mr. Vance and Lord Owen in various

subsequent meetings with leaders in Belgrade or with the Knin authorities as well as with the Croatian leadership. These discussions focused especially on the repair and operation of the Peruca Dam, the Maslenica Bridge and Zemunik Airport, water supplies to Zadar and other areas of economic and humanitarian concern.

28. In the second week of September, subcommissions of the Joint Commission began to meet on cease-fire and security and on humanitarian and economic issues. They have made some initial progress in a practical and cooperative atmosphere. "Hot lines" have been established between the parties with regard to security issues, and experts on both sides have drawn up agreed plans for the repair of utilities and other economic installations. On the joint initiative of both sides, the Commission's fifth meeting, on 18 September 1992, decided to establish a subcommission on refugees and displaced persons, which will hold its first meeting on 28 September.

29. Following the agreement of the Serb authorities in Knin to withdraw their "special police forces" from the Peruca High Dam, UNPROFOR brought in international consultants to inspect the installation. They produced a disturbing report about its condition and, after discussions held by Mr. Vance in Belgrade on 12 September, General Nambiar ordered the Kenyan battalion to take control of the dam. This was fully effected on 14 September, and UNPROFOR is now in sole authority at this vital and vulnerable installation. Emergency measures were at once taken to lower the level of water and reduce the pressure on the structure. This briefly provided, for the first time in many months, an adequate flow of water for power stations downstream from the dam to generate power for much of the adjoining region. However, it appears that Serb military forces had, prior to their withdrawal earlier in the year, laid explosive charges at various points in and around the dam, and the urgent cooperation of the authorities in Belgrade and Knin has been sought to deal with this danger. The Croatian Government has accepted that the emergency situation at the dam required UNPROFOR immediately to deploy not merely unarmed observers but also armed troops there. It has also indicated its willingness to supply Sector South with electricity.

30. Having regard to the vital nature of the Peruca Dam and to the environmental disaster that would result from its destruction, I have directed UNPROFOR to remain in charge of it until its structure is fully safeguarded and it can be handed over to the appropriate authorities. Despite previous assurances, however, it is unclear whether the Serb authorities in Knin are ready to respect this arrangement. Senior members have told UNPROFOR that they will insist on restoring their "authority" over the dam. At the time of writing, UNPROFOR troops from two contingents are now in control of the dam and its immediate vicinity. Several hundred Serb "special militia" are also deployed around it.

V. PUBLIC INFORMATION

31. The tragedies that have erupted in parts of the former Yugoslavia have, to a significant extent, been inspired and exacerbated by propaganda, rumour and disinformation. Nowhere is this more evident than in the sectors and "pink zones". Some national leaders continue, by their rhetoric, to keep wounds open and use language that threatens former adversaries and heightens tension. Distorted and inflammatory accounts of the conflict, and of gross human rights violations, are presented daily by the national media. The peoples of the region are caught up in a maelstrom of invective and disinformation. In this connection, UNPROFOR has sought, with the very limited means at its disposal, to explain its mission, its functions and the limits of its mandate, using print, radio and television. Yet the role of one of the largest and most complex missions undertaken by the United Nations is still not well understood. While the authorities have, to a greater or lesser degree, provided UNPROFOR with television and, especially, radio time, such cooperation has not been consistent. In particular, the Croatian authorities have banned several UNPROFOR radio broadcasts, including brief interviews with the Force Commander and other senior UNPROFOR officials, and have prevented the Force from broadcasting a television programme in which it sought to explain its mandate.

32. In a situation in which the communities remain deeply divided, the need for an expansion and intensification of UNPROFOR's information activities is perceived by many senior local officials, by independent observers and by UNPROFOR personnel in field locations. The local information situation was also the subject of sharp comment by the Special Rapporteur of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. UNPROFOR has now developed, on the basis of its experience thus far in former Yugoslavia, a plan for an information programme to deal with the problems outlined above. Operating throughout the mission area, it would promote implementation of the UNPROFOR mandate by disseminating a clear understanding of its functions and tasks, countering propaganda and misinformation, and providing timely and objective information. The expanding mandate of the United Nations in the area, including its chairmanship of the International Conference on the former Yugoslavia, creates a need to reach out to the wider population (as well as to specific target groups). It is necessary to be able to explain objectives and methods and to win popular support for what is to be done. Proposals for an expansion of UNPROFOR's information activities will be included in the performance report and projection of future requirements that will be submitted to the General Assembly during the month of October.

VI. OBSERVATIONS

33. It will be clear from the present report that, although there are positive elements elsewhere (notably the agreement on the Prevlaka peninsula), UNPROFOR is encountering increasing obstacles in its efforts to implement the United Nations plan in the United Nations Protected Areas. This is due to the failure of the parties, and principally of the Knin authorities and extremist

forces in the United Nations Protected Areas, to give UNPROFOR the full and continuing cooperation which it must have if it is to be able to carry out the tasks entrusted to it by the Security Council. It is to be recalled that the United Nations plan was conceived of as a means to facilitate the negotiation of an overall political settlement and not as an alternative to such a settlement. Attempts by the Knin authorities to use the United Nations presence as a way of establishing their "independence" are therefore inconsistent with the intent of the plan. Equally, difficulties are caused for UNPROFOR if actions and public statements on the Croatian side create the impression that it is Zagreb's intention to resolve matters by military action rather than at the negotiating table.

34. The root cause of the deterioration in the United Nations Protected Areas since late July has been the Knin authorities' decision to create new paramilitary forces. This action is inconsistent with the demilitarization of the United Nations Protected Areas and is thus a blatant violation of the United Nations plan. The damage caused is all the greater because of the lawless and cruel behaviour of these so-called "police units". In spite of UNPROFOR's vigilance, they have revived some of the worst features of Serb behaviour during the war in Croatia, including "ethnic cleansing", and have created conditions of near anarchy, especially in Sector East. The authorities in Belgrade have assured senior United Nations interlocutors of their opposition both to the violation of the Vance plan and to the revival of "ethnic cleansing" and have promised to use their influence to bring matters under control. Although this was reaffirmed by the Prime Minister of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in a meeting with the Secretary-General on 25 September 1992, they have not yet succeeded in this.

35. It is particularly distressing that the deteriorating security situation has made it impossible for UNPROFOR and UNHCR to start major programmes for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes. This is a central feature of the United Nations plan and it had been hoped that substantial progress would be possible before winter sets in. The frustration at this state of affairs expressed by the Government of Croatia and the refugees themselves is entirely understandable. But it is important that they should exercise restraint; uncoordinated and forceful attempts to return would only create further tragedies.

36. In this connection, and indeed in the wider context of other conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, the Security Council may wish to consider whether it should take action in response to the many cases in which persons have been coerced into signing away their property and rights of residence. To this end, the Security Council might consider declaring, at the appropriate time, that such acts of renunciation, undertaken under duress, are null and void and create no legal rights or obligations.

37. The situation in the "pink zones" has also been a cause of considerable concern during the reporting period, although the most recent developments have been somewhat more positive. The purpose of the Joint Commission established by Security Council resolution 762 (1992) is to facilitate the

restoration of the Croatian Government's authority in the "pink zones", the status of which is quite different in this respect from that of the United Nations Protected Areas. Completion of that process would remove the causes of many of the current cease-fire violations, permit many displaced persons to return to their homes and help to rebuild confidence between Croats and Serbs.

38. A particularly disagreeable feature of the situation in the "pink zones" is the readiness of both sides, but especially of the Serb side, to cut power and water supplies as a means of putting pressure on their opponents. Such behaviour causes great and unnecessary hardship, which will increase sharply during the coming winter unless present trends can be reversed. Again this is a problem that afflicts other parts of the former Yugoslavia, especially the city of Sarajevo, and the Security Council may wish to support the current efforts of Mr. Vance and Lord Owen on this issue by calling upon all concerned to work together to restore power and water supplies before the coming winter.

39. The agreement on the withdrawal of the remaining elements of the Yugoslav Army from Croatia and the demilitarization of the Prevlaka peninsula, described in paragraphs 23 and 24 above, is a positive development. Detailed arrangements for the implementation of this agreement are currently being finalized. Once this has been done, I shall expect the Yugoslav Army to complete its long-delayed withdrawal from Croatia. Meanwhile, I recommend that the Security Council authorize UNPROFOR to assume responsibility for monitoring the agreed arrangements. The additional resources required, which will not be large, will be provided for in the performance report and projection of future requirements, to be submitted to the General Assembly during the month of October.

40. To sum up, it has not so far been possible for UNPROFOR to achieve the full implementation of the United Nations plan in the three United Nations Protected Areas or to restore a degree of normality and interethnic tolerance there before the winter sets in. This is in spite of strenuous efforts by the Force Commander and his staff, supported by Mr. Vance and Lord Owen and by senior officials from Headquarters, and in spite of the clearly expressed decisions of the Security Council. The sad fact is that the parties, and especially the Knin authorities, have not accorded UNPROFOR the full and sustained cooperation that is necessary for it to carry out its various mandates. This situation has to be corrected urgently; otherwise there will be a real danger of a renewal of widespread conflict in and around the United Nations Protected Areas. I and the Force Commander will continue to do everything we can to pursuade the parties to honour their commitments and accept the will of the Security Council. I am confident that we will have the Council's full support in these endeavours.